

**Washington State Human Rights Commission
Meeting of
August 27, 2004
Minutes**

Conference Call, Olympia

ATTENDANCE

Commissioners: Charlotte Coker, Commission Chair; Ellis Casson; Dallas Barnes; J. Reiko Callner; and Ben Cabildo. A quorum was present.

Staff: Marc Brenman, Executive Director; Tanya Calahan, Executive Assistant to the Commissioners; Regina Hook, Operations Manager; Renee Knight, Administrative Services Manager, Tim Reynolds, Network Administrator; Traci Friedl and Paul Goulding, Assistant Attorneys General.

(Audio tape one – side one)

OPENING

Commissioner Coker called the meeting to order at 10 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commissioners considered the minutes of the July 23, 2004 Commission meeting. Commissioner Callner requested that Tanya Calahan correct the misspelling of Congressman Adam Smith's name. Commissioner Barnes asked to discuss the Equal Opportunity Compliance Investigator workload planning document. By consensus the Commissioners agreed to set discussion of the document aside until the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Casson then made a motion to approve the minutes with the noted correction. Commissioner Callner seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

Tanya Calahan reviewed the action items.

CASE CLOSURES

Commissioner Callner asked about the Cobb v. Trailwagons Inc. no reasonable cause finding. She asked whether complainant's alleged inappropriate behavior mentioned in the finding was defined. Staff will look into this issue.

Commissioner Cabildo asked about the Romero v. Holbrook Inc. no reasonable cause finding. The finding contains a typographical error. The year should be October 2003 instead of October 2004.

Commissioner Casson made a motion to approve category one and two case closures with the exception of the Cobb case and with the correction to the Romero v. Holbrook finding. Commissioner Barnes abstained. Commissioner Callner seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

The Commissioners considered the conciliation failure in the case of Porter v. TC Systems Inc. Commissioner Callner abstained from voting on this case as she has not reviewed the finding. She requested that staff highlight the conciliation failure cases so they stand out. The Commissioners set this case aside so those that haven't read it can do so.

Regina Hook later reported that the alleged inappropriate behavior in the Cobb v. Trailwagons Inc. case was described as "freak outs" and "temper tantrums." Commissioner Callner made a motion to approve the no reasonable cause finding with additional language in the finding regarding complainant's angry outbursts. Commissioner Casson seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Marc Brenman reviewed his August 26, 2004 written monthly Executive Director's Report.

By consensus the Commissioners confirmed the appointment of Laurie Rasmussen as an Equal Opportunity Compliance Investigator 2.

Dawn Coffinberry was hired as a Customer Service Specialist in the Olympia office. Her first day was August 23, 2004.

Mr. Brenman spoke about plans to implement a career ladder for the agency. Having a career ladder will help reward high performance and increase the regularity of such performance.

Mr. Brenman highlighted other areas of his report including case production and the status of special projects such as the statewide civil rights conference and outreach to teenagers in Spokane.

Commissioner Casson asked about moving the December 1-3, 2004 Statewide Civil Rights Conference from the Tacoma Rhodes Center to the Sheraton. He also raised concern about the parking costs at the Sheraton as the daily rate is expensive. Staff will look into the parking cost issue.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Commissioner Coker announced that into executive session 11:02 a.m. to discuss pending litigation. The regular meeting will reconvene at 11:30 a.m.

(Audio tape one – side two)

The regular meeting reconvened at 11:30 a.m. Commissioner Callner made a motion to direct the Assistant Attorney General to forward the Campbell ex rel v. Timberlane case to the Solicitor General's Office with the recommendation to appeal the matter to the Supreme Court. Commissioner Cabildo seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS

The Commissioners discussed the issue of information on claims and lawsuits against the agency. Commissioner Callner clarified that the Commissioners need to make a policy decision about how delegation of settlement authority should be done. She suggested problem delegating the matter to the Executive Director and the Chairperson.

Commissioner Barnes asked about various decision packages that the agency will submit to the Office of Financial Management. He asked about a proposal for additional management staff and technology upgrades. Tim Reynolds explained the justification of obtaining additional computers for staff. The warranty for computers is only three years. The agency's database needs upgrading also.

Commissioner Barnes asked for a budget line item for the Commissioners. Marc Brenman asked what should be in the decision package as it should contain sufficient detail.

2005 COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE

Discussion took place regarding the 2005 schedule. Operations Manager Regina Hook suggested that the Commissioners have a meeting in Vancouver. The Commissioners

will send their input regarding the schedule to Tanya Calahan. They will then discuss it at the September 24, 2004 Commission meeting.

The Commissioners set aside the Chairperson tenure discussion until the September 24, 2004 Commission meeting.

OTHER ITEMS

The Commissioners considered the conciliation failure for the Porter v. TC Systems case. Commissioner Coker made a motion to authorize transmittal of the case to the Attorney General's Office. Commissioner Casson seconded the motion. MOTION CARRIED.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tanya Y. Calahan
Executive Assistant to the Commissioners